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EASTERN EUROPEAN LAW

B U L G A R I A

CHURCHES AND RELIGION

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Churches and Religion

Introduction

795 The vast majority of the Bulgarian Nation belongs to the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church, or Greek Catholic Church, which is also the church of the Russians, Greeks, Serbians, Romanians, as well as the Armenians, Syrians, and other Near Eastern nationalities. Second in number is the Moslem religious minority, with the Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant denominations representing only minute fractions of the total population.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church has no central international authority. It consists of several rather loosely-connected national churches which have emerged at one time or another from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. It has been the persistent tendency of the various national churches to emancipate themselves as separate entities and cooperate with the respective national 659 states. In the case of Bulgaria, all efforts of the State, from the establishment of the Princedom in 1878 to the Communist seizure of power in 1944, have centered upon the creation of a national church independent of foreign primates and symbolic of national unity. Therefore, Bulgarian legislation, until 1949, was concerned primarily with the nation's Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Act on Religious Denominations put into effect by

659 the Communist Government in 1949, sought to establish a uniform regime for all religious denominations in the country. Nevertheless, some of its provisions, especially Section 3, recognize the historic role of the Bulgarian Church and attempt to use the established tradition for the purposes of the communist policy.

Thus, the present status of the Church in Bulgaria cannot be properly evaluated without a survey of its past.

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648 I. Christianity in Bulgaria, 865 -1870

A sizable Bulgarian Kingdom came into being in 680 A.D. in the area between the Danube and the Black Sea bordering on the Balkan territories of Byzantium.

Seeking international recognition, one of its kings, Boris I, agreed in 865 A.D. to the conversion of his people to Christianity under the auspices of the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Byzantine missionaries and priests were swiftly dispatched to Bulgaria to evangelize the country. Five years later, the Patriarch conceded, on insistent Bulgarian demands, the right of the Bulgarian King to have a Bulgarian archbishop with authority to crown kings and ordain bishops, retaining, nevertheless, supremacy over the new ecclesiastic hierarchy.

The extension of the Patriarch's authority to Bulgaria was disliked in Rome, and contacts were soon established between Boris and Pope Nicolaus I. However, the territorial proximity of Byzantium prevailed as a factor and Boris' original orientation

175 toward the East stayed. It became solidly rooted when in the
797 ensuing years he patterned the organization of his State after
648 Byzantium and introduced to Bulgaria adaptations of Byzantine law, such as the "Statute of Trial of Men", the "Nomocanon", etc.

[793] The new church strongly tended to emancipate itself from the primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople and rid itself of Byzantine clergy. A fortunate chance presented itself when an alphabet was devised to suit the peculiarities of the Slavic tongues. A wave of Slav awakening hit Bulgaria during the reign of Boris' son, Simeon I, and soon scriptures and prayer books, in Bulgarian, displaced the media of Byzantine influence. The process was so rapid and his military victories so promising that Simeon proclaimed the archbishop of Preslav a patriarch independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople and himself Czar of the Bulgarians and the Greeks. Seven bishoprics were established, of which those of Preslav and Ochrida (Macedonia) became important centers of enlightenment.

Bulgaria turned again toward Rome in the 13th century. Desirous of international recognition which had been lost during the Byzantine domination of Bulgaria (1018 - 1186), the Bulgarian King Kaloyan contacted the Pope with an offer to accept the Pope's primacy over the Bulgarian church in exchange for an imperial crown. In 1204, a Catholic cardinal arrived at the Bulgarian capital Tirnovo to hand a crown to Kaloyan on behalf of the Pope and ordain a Bulgarian prelate. This Western orientation caused by the Crusades and dictated by political expediency was rather
000 short-lived. In 1232, Kaloyan's successor, Ivan Asen, denounced

175 In 1232 Kaloyan's successor, Ivan Asen, denounced
795 the union and severed all ties with the Roman Catholic Church.

During the nearly five centuries of Turkish rule (1393-1878) supreme authority over religious matters in the Bulgarian lands was vested in the Patriarch of Constantinople who was recognized very early (15th century) by the Turks as the religious head of all Christians in their empire. A Bulgarian Archbishopric at Ochrida was nevertheless allowed to function untill 1766 when the Greek Patriarch finally prevailed over the Turks to have this last vestige of Bulgarian past abolished.

[656] According to the general principle of the Ottoman law the non-Mohammedan communities enjoyed the jurisdiction not only in the religious matters but also in domestic relations and inheritance. Thus, all the disputes arising in this field among the Bulgarians were in fact judged in the last analysis by the dignitaries of the Patriarch of Constantinople who were predominantly Greek.

After the collapse of the State, the Bulgarian clergy was either banished or eliminated, thus opening a spiritual vacuum which was swiftly filled by the Patriarch's hierarchy, leaving only remote monasteries intact. From those very monasteries were to spring three centuries later (1762) the strong currents of a national Rehaisance which finally culminated in religious and cultural emancipation of the Bulgarian nation from the Greek Patriarchate and Political liberation from the Ottoman Empire.

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II. Establishment of a Bulgarian Exarchate and Relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople

A. Under the Turkish Rule, 1870-1878

With the approval of the Moslem Sultans, the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople maintained a complete religious, and in many instances, cultural control over the areas inhabited by the Bulgarian people. A detailed apparatus was set up manned by appointees of the Patriarch exclusively. Treated as being the spoils of the office, the population was exposed to corruption and threat of Hellenization. Reaction was sporadic until 1762 when an obscure Bulgarian monk, Father Paisiy, published his History of the Bulgarian People and roving the country to let the people copy his book, aroused national pride and consciousness. From then on, the ideas of a separate Bulgarian political and cultural entity gave birth to a movement for national awakening and emancipation. Wisely, it first concentrated on the issue of Greek religious authority over Bulgarian lands versus a national Bulgarian church within the Turkish Empire. The issue came to a climax in the events of 1870-1872.

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In 1870, the Turkish Government finally intervened in the religious dispute between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarian population under its jurisdiction and issued an Imperial Decree (Firman) which recognized the validity of the Bulgarians' claim to an independent ecclesiastical authority and provided for the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate. In designating the area of jurisdiction of the new

656 795 175 Church, the Firman enumerated some of the Bulgarian-populated regions and provided for the holding of a plebiscite to determine the preference of the rest of the Bulgarian lands:

> If the population of any other places besides those enumerated above, and professing the Orthodox faith, should wish unanimously or at least by a two-thirds majority to be subject to the Bulgarian Exarchate, and if subsequent investigation should prove this to be so, their desire should be gratified (Article 10).*

795 In the following year, an all-Bulgarian church council convened at Constantinople to lay the foundations of a national Bulgarian church. The council met with stubborn opposition on the part of the Patriarchate which, claiming the status of an ecumenical church, refused to consent to the proposed creation of a church on the principle of nationality. The formula of the Ottoman Government in the Firman of 1870 whereby the Exarchate, though autonomous, was to recognize the primacy of the Patriarchate, would have avoided all the conflict if it had not been for the issue of the Exarch's residence. Supported by the Ottoman government, the Bulgarian council took the stand that the residence of the Exarch must be in Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Empire and seat of the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate opposed the Exarch's having a seat in the same locality as the Patriarch himself.

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* The full text of this important document is in Stoyan Pretic, The Aspirations of Bulgaria (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Co., 1915), appendix.

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The conflict was aggravated when the Patriarchate refused to recognize the Statute of Exarchate drafted by the Bulgarian Church Council. One of the objectionable points was the new method of filling the positions in the hierarchy of the Bulgarian Church. All prelates in the Bulgarian lands were hitherto appointed by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Under the Statute of the Exarchate the Bishops were to be elected by the diocesans, and the Exarch, by the highest dignitaries of the Church with the participation of representatives of the layman.

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The refusal of the Patriarchate to recognize the Exarchate and its Statute provoked a schism, or split, between the Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Church. This split, between the Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Church. This split lasted until 1945 when a reconciliation was negotiated and achieved.

In spite of he fierce opposition of the Greek clergy and the Patriarchate in Constantinople, the Bulgarian regions (Danube province with the capital in Rushtchuk, and Nishava province with the capital in Nish), as well as most of Macedonia and Thrace, voted to submit themselves to the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. An Exarch was elected by the Bulgarian Church Council, and with the consent of the sublime Porte established his seat in Constantinople.

This unique plebiscite, which emancipated the Bulgarian nation from Greek ecclesiastic domination, became

795 the symbol of the religious and cultural unity of the Bulgarian nation and constituted the prelude to its political liberation in 1878.

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B. From the Creation of Princedom to the Balkan Wars, 1878-1913

Under the treaty of Berlin which settled the issues raised by the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878, the provinces of the Turkish Empire with predominant Bulgarian population were not included in one body politic. Two regions were incorporated into Romania (Dobrudja) and Serbia (Morava region).*

Moreover, two large Bulgarian provinces, Thrace and Macedonia, remained within the Ottoman Empire. The rest assigned to the Bulgarians and at first formed two political entities: Princedom of Bulgaria, including the regions between the Danube River and the Balkan range (present Northern Bulgaria) and was placed under the nominal sovereignty of the Turkish Sultan. In the region south of the Balkans (present Southern Bulgaria) an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire - Eastern

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* Dobrudja was given to Romania in compensation for the loss of Bessarabia annexed by Russia. The regions east of Morava River with the city of Nish were given to Serbia. This met the aspiration of Austria-Hungary to divert Serbian attention from the Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina occupied by Austro-Hungarian Empire and annexed in 1908.

175 Rumelia - was formed but it joined, in 1885, the Princedom of
131 Bulgaria and severed all ties with Turkey.

Thus, in fact, there were two Bulgarian churches:
795 that of the Princedom of Bulgaria, no longer under the authority of the Ottoman Empire, and that of Turkey, which lay outside the jurisdiction of the new Pricedom. A reorganization of the Exarchate was imperative but not easy to achieve. There was at first a provisional, more or less arbitrary, ecclesiastical organization. This situation lasted until 1882; a compromise was then reached and in 1883, the Sobranie (National Assembly or legislature) of the Princedom prepared a draft of a statute for the Exarchate for the territory of the Princedom. The final wording of the Statute was not completed until 1895.

Under this statute the Church was administered by both the Exarch in Constantinople and the Holy Synod, or Council, established in Sofia. All matters involving the Bulgarian Church in the Princedom were submitted to the Exarch through the Holy Synod or decided by the Synod itself. The Exarch administered directly the affairs of the Bulgarian churches in the provinces remaining in the Ottoman Empire, including Macedonia and Thrace. However, the hope was never given up by the Bulgarian churchmen and people that one day Macedonia and Thrace would join Bulgaria and thus the reunion of the Exarch with the Synod would be made possible.

These hopes were not fulfilled as is explained infra. The statute was amended several times but the amendments were of minor importance and dealt only with current, purely administrative problems.

000 administrative, problems.

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C. From the Balkan Wars to the Communist Seizure of Power, 1913-1944

As a result of the Balkan War in 1913, Macedonia and Thrace were detached from the Ottoman Empire but only a small area was included into Bulgaria. The greatest part of the two regions was incorporated into Serbia and Greece. Both Serbia and Greece had their national Eastern Orthodox Churches and refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarch over the Bulgarian parishes and dioceses within these countries. The Bulgarian bishops loyal to the Exarch were expelled and the Bulgarian parishes added to the dioceses of the Serbian or the Greek national churches. The Bulgarian Exarch in Constantinople, deprived of his jurisdiction over these regions, went to Sofia and died there in 1913. The Bulgarian Exarchate, however, continued to be conceived by the Bulgarian churchmen and people as an ecclesiastic organization designed to embrace all Bulgarian dioceses and parishes both in Bulgaria proper and in Macedonia and Thrace. There no longer existed any hope either for the incorporation of these provinces into Bulgaria or for the extension of the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate over them. The election of an Exarch was continuously postponed because it was felt that any election of a new Exarch without the participation of the representatives of the Bulgarian parishes under foreign rule would run against the idea of the unity of the Bulgarian people and the Bulgarian Church.

175 The Exarch's office continued to be maintained in Constantinople while the churches in Bulgaria were administered by the Holy Synod in Sofia.

World War I failed to yield the above-mentioned Macedonia and Thracian territories to Bulgaria; what is more, it sanctioned the loss to Romania of Southern Dodrudja (retroceded to Bulgaria in 1940).

In 1921, a Bulgarian National Church Council convened in Sofia in order to revise the Statute of the Exarchate. The Council established the procedure for the election of the new Exarch by the Bulgarians in Bulgaria alone without the participation of the Bulgarians in Thrace and Macedonia that the elections were continuously postponed. They were held at last in 1945 under the Fatherland Front government (infra).

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III. Status of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church within Bulgaria until 1944

A. Relationship between State and Church

The basic principles regulating the status of the Bulgarian Church are stated in Article 39 of the Constitution of 1879:

Article 39

The princedom of Bulgaria, which constitutes an integral part of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical area, shall be under the religious administration of the Holy Synod, the supreme spiritual authority of the Bulgarian Church, wherever that authority may be located. Through the latter, the

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Princedom preserves its link with the Ecumenical Eastern Church in all matters concerning the dogmas of the faith.

The opening phrase suggests that the Bulgarian Church is something of a higher authority than the State authority of the Princedom of Bulgaria. However, this has never been observed and the Bulgarian State has always striven to control the Church. There existed, however, an apparent linkage and close cooperation between the Church and State.

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In the broad sense of the term the Church was a state institution and its officials, agents of the public authority.* The budget of the Church was part of that of the State, viz., of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Denominations, which represented the state in all religious matters. All bishops, priests and administrative employees in the various parishes and dioceses received from the government modest salaries which supplemented their income from fees received for religious rites and services performed by them. Aside from that, the churches, and especially the monasteries, disposed for their subsistence, of valuable properties, such as fields, forests, or buildings, either bought by them or willed to them by parishioners. All that netted a sizable income.

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* Ivan Altinov, Divroce in Bulgaria: Brakorazvodnite Conflicti v Bulgaria (Sofia, 1929), p. 9.

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These revenues, even though they were affected to some extent by the land reforms of the Agrarian Government of Alexander Stambeliiski, not only met all needs not fully covered by the State Budget, but enabled the Church to erect quite monumental buildings. The most remarkable of these were the Palace of the Holy Synod, the two seminaries in Plovdiv and Sofia, the Divinity Academy (which was accepted by the University of Sofia as a theological faculty) and last but not least, the Archiepiscopal Palace in Sofia, of which Archbishop Stefan, later elected Exarch of the Bulgarian Church, had said that it was "a small Versailles".

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The Church did not take part in the management of State affairs, since it officially did not mix in politics; but it always supported the State, always willing to bless the latter's public functions with religious ceremonies. National holidays were celebrated with a Te Deum at which the local bishop officiated, together with the prescribed number of priests. All consecrations were prrformed before the eyes of the people by representatives of the Church, bishops or priests --as the occasion required.

Customarily the National Assembly upon its official opening began its work by attending a religious ceremony (blessing of the water) at which the Archbishop of Sofia swore in the deputies. In general, oaths of ministers of state, deputies, officials, soldiers, and witnesses in court were always administered by clergymen. It may be said that nothing

659 ever occurred, not even military parades, without the blessing and prominent presence of the representatives of the Church.

Thus, a close cooperation was established between the State and the Church, and the Bulgarian people considered it quite important, even though Bulgarians were not very religious. The Bulgarian people saw in the church a national institution for which they had fought bitterly before they had obtained statehood, and which was a source of encouragement in good and of solace in bad days. These were not two separate concepts but actually two parts of one and the same national concept. Given this union it is not at all astonishing that some prelates temporarily left their religious duties and assumed political or diplomatic functions, as it was the case, immediately after the liberation of Bulgaria, of Clement, the Bishop of Stara Zagora, who in 1879-80 was Prime Minister for several months and later headed the Bulgarian delegations frequently sent to St. Petersburg before the Russian Tzar. In later times and during World War II, two bishops, Stefan of Sofia (a Russophile) and Paisii of Vratza (a germanophile), became notorious by their endeavors to play a part in politics and aspire to the position of Prime Minister.

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692 B. Ecclesiastic Courts, Marriage and Divorce

Not being separated from the State, the Bulgarian Church performed, up to the advent of the communist regime, certain public functions. Religious celebration was required for the validity of a marriage, vital statistics were kept by the clergy and even the legal questions of marriage and divorce

795 692 were under the jurisdiction of ecclesiastic courts. The participation of laymen in these courts rendered them national and democratic in character.

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* The matter is treated in Part VI of the Statute of the Exarchate, completed only in 1897 and passed by the National Assembly the same year (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 85, April 22, 1897).

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The ecclesiastic courts applied church law. An ecclesiastic court was attached to each diocese (there are ten of these in Bulgaria), nominally presided over by the bishop who was usually represented by his assistant, the vicar. These ecclesiastical courts were of two kinds:

1. Disciplinary courts whose function it was to try delinquent priests. They consisted of bishop and two priests from the diocese. At present they continue to function, though improperly.

2. Courts whose function it was to settle legal questions, arising from marital relations, and to grant devorces. They consisted of the vicar and two diocesm councilmen who were secular members of the Diocesan Council functioning at the see of the bishop; this Council annually elected two of its members to serve as Diocesan judges.

The decisions of these courts could be appealed to the Holy Synod, which had a special section for divorce cases, and which, sitting in full session, acted as a court of the last resort. The Holy Synod, also had the sole right to try delinquent bishops whenever called upon to do so. In such cases the trial was conducted before a court composed of the president and two members of the Holy Synod, especially designated for that purpose.

Before giving consideration to a request for divorce, the diocesan court always attempted to reconcile the parties. Even after the cases had been taken up by the court, if the

evidence was not sufficient, the court could order a temporary 698
separation of the parties with the recommendation that they themselves explore all possibilities of reconciliation. Only after all such possibilities had been exhausted did the court grant the divorce.

C. Religious Instruction and Training of Priests

Religious instruction in public schools and theological 793
training of priests were conducted in a manner different from 874
that used in many other countries. The Bulgarian Church did not operate any denominational schools open to all. For a period of time it had no special schools for training of the priests, and, finally, religion was not always taught at public schools by clerics. Special schools for the training of future priests became definitely established only after the Exarchate came into being and in some respect were under the supervision of the State.

After the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate and especially after the Bulgarian State was restored, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church took measures to raise the cultural standard of its hierarchy. Until then its higher dignitaries had been instructed first at the Greek Theological Academy on the island of Halki (one of the Princely Isles off Constantinople in the Marmara Sea) and later (after 1878), in Moscow, the corresponding centers in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria-Hungary (mainly at Czernowitz in Bukovina). To carry out its

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874 training program the Church founded two theological schools, one in Samokov (1883) which later (1903) was moved to Sofia for the Princedom of Bulgaria and one in Constantinople for the Bulgarian inhabitants of Thrace and Macedonia which, after the Balkan Wars, was moved to Plovdiv. Later, in 1917, a Theological Academy was opened at Sofia and soon (1921) transformed into a Theological College at the University of Sofia, making it possible for the graduates of the theological schools to receive higher theological education and qualify for episcopal posts.

It must be emphasized, however, that both the theological schools and the theological college, which were subsidized by the State, were administered by the Holy Synod only in purely religious matters; their curricula were under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education. The theological schools gave their students not only a theological education but also, a general one as well, which made them equivalent to secondary schoolds, Hence, those graduates of the theological schools who did not wish to pursue an ecclesiastical career could select another field of study at the University. Thus, ex-theological students were to be found in all professions. Some became politicians and Statesmen, as, for instance, was the case of the distinguished leader of the Peasant Union, Dimitr Guitchoff presently imprisoned by the communist regime. This was possible only because the ecclesiastical education was as broad as public education in public schools.

000 public schools.

793 A certain amount of religious instruction was given in the primary and secondary schools, religious history being included in the curriculum. However, these subjects were not taught by clerics but by the laymen, in most cases graduates of the theological schools. Clerics served as instructors in the secondary schools only in the first years after the establishment of the Bulgarian State when the demand for educators exceeded the available number of teachers.

IV. Status of the Bulgarian Church Developments Since 1944

A. General Survey

[178] 659 The seizure of power on September 9, 1944, by the Communist-dominated Fatherland Front coalition signalized important changes in the position of religion and the religious denominations. Ideologically, the dominant Bulgarian Communist Party was committed to a negation of all religion as the "opium for the masses". Practically, its policy toward religion and the Orthodox Church in particular was determined by more realistic considerations.

The communists could only desire to destroy the relationship established between the State and the Church. Likewise, they could not but desire to reduce and if possible, to destroy the great freedom which the Constitution of 1879 granted to the minority denominations allowing them to "be

659 governed by their ecclesiastical authorities under the supreme supervision of the minister of state." (Article 42).

659 798 However, the communists did not attack the Church but on the one hand, they proceeded very cautiously in religious matters not wanting to offend openly the feelings of the people; on the other, under a new policy toward religion inaugurated by the U.S.S.R. they did not undertake to destroy the Church but use it for their purposes. The general line established by the Russian Communist Party in 1942 called for a truce with and the utilization of religion for the sake of political expediency. A lesser factor for this attitude was the necessity to operate within a political coalition in which there existed strong forces of moderation.

Thus, in its policy toward religion the Fatherland Front government declined at first to adopt a clear-cut formula and proceeded with individual measures primarily dealing with the Orthodox Church. The regime governing the status of the Orthodox Church until 1944 was tacitly suspended.

The communists did not proclaim immediately the complete separation of the Church and State, which they had originally planned. This could have provoked great discontent not only because of the national and moral prestige enjoyed by the Bulgarian Church, but also because of the deprivation of priests and bishops of the financial aid which they received under the State budget. Thus, the communists confined themselves to the elimination of the instruction of religion, which until

659 then had been conducted in all schools, to the removal of the
798 presence of church officials at the taking of the oath and to the introduction of civil marriage, which became obligatory, instead of the religious one, which hitherto was required
[671] (Articles 1 and 2 of the Decree having force of Law concerning Marriage, Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 108, May 12, 1945).

Although there was no formal declaration of the separation of Church and State, representatives of the church no longer appeared at public functions and the part which the church played in public life was mutely but radically reduced.

659 Nevertheless, the government continued to subsidize the church by allotting funds to it in the State budget. Moreover, in a purely political move, it amended the Statute
[671] of the Exarchate with a special Decree-Law (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 11, January 15, 1945) and authorized the election of an Exarch. Apparently the government preferred to deal in the future with one man - the Exarch - instead of a Synod. Again the Bulgarians were always strongly in favor of having a single prelate at the head of their national church.

793 In January 1945 Archbishop Stefan of Sofia was elected Exarch of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria. The new Exarch was an ardent Russophile, but not a bolshevik or communist sympathizer. Immediately after the election he journeyed to Moscow to pay a visit to the Moscow Patriarch, Alexis, which demonstrated a recognition of the primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate, and sent a delegation to the Patriarchate of Constantinople to negotiate for the removal

of the schism which separated the Bulgarian Church from the Constantinople Patriarchate since 1871 (see supra, I). Presumably, the Soviet authorities expected the Russian Orthodox Church to restore the Russian religious influence throughout the Orthodox world. To carry out this mission the Patriarch of Moscow announced a journey to the Holy places and the adjoining countries in the Near East. The Bulgarian Exarch was expected to visit the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople to demonstrate the lifting of the schism and meet the Russian Patriarch there for a demonstration of the latter's primacy over the Orthodox world. An affirmation of the Russian religious protectorate over the Eastern Orthodox nations in the Orient was planned as the preliminary step to the expansion of soviet political influence in that area.

This plan for concerted action, however, failed in its implications because the Turkish Government became highly alarmed by the announcement of Patriarch Alexis' journey. Under its influence the Patriarchate of Constantinople asked the Patriarch of Moscow to postpone his visit. The Bulgarian Exarch for his part achieved the removal of the schism by the Patriarchate of Constantinople whose jurisdiction had already been reduced to a few dioceses in and around the former Ottoman capital. The reconciliation between the two churches took place on February 23, 1945, and in October of the same year Exarch Stefan paid a visit to the Patriarch of Constantinople to inaugurate the reconciliation between the two churches.

However, as a result of a rather complex political development (see Appendix A) the Holy Synod deposed on the

793 communist initiative the Exarch in 1948. He was banished to a remote villa in the province town of Karlovo. At the present time the Bulgarian Church is again administered by the Holy Synod.

659, 642 The general principles of the communist policy toward religion were finally embodied in the so-called "Dimitrov Constitution" passed on December 4, 1947. Its Article 78 states:

> Freedom of conscience and religion, as well as freedom of performance of religious rituals is guaranteed to all citizens.
>
> The Church is separated from the State.
>
> A special law shall determine the legal status, the question of material support, and the right of internal autonomy and self-government of the various religious communities.
>
> The misuse of church and religion for political purposes and the creation of political organizations on a religious basis is forbidden.

There is no mention of the status and functions of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. All questions pertaining to this Church, as well as to the minority denominations in the country, were left in abeyance until February 1949, when a general law on religious denominations was passed on the strength of the cited constitutional provision (infra, B). This law did, among other things, mention the Bulgarian Church. This law is analyzed and translated in the next Section B.

B. The General Law of 1949

1. Summary and Analysis

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The Communist Government promulgated, on March 1, 1949, a general law on the religious denominations in the country (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 48, March 1, 1949). The full text of the law is given infra, (2). This law was promulgated while the trial of the Protestant pastors was in progress. Although it recognizes that the "Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the traditional religion of the Bulgarian people associated with its history" and suggest that "it may become the people's democratic church" (Section 3), the law introduces a uniform regime for all denominations, the over-all detailed control of which is vested in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While it restates the constitutional provisions for freedom of conscience and religion and separation of church and state, the law recognizes only the exercise of "religious rituals" (Section 2) and makes no mention of activities for the propagation of the faith. To exist, a denomination requires recognition by the government granted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Section 6) subject to arbitrary withdrawal. Recognition by the government of a denomination carries with it the status of a legal entity for its church.

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The governing bodies of the denominations are responsible before the government (Section 9) and must be composed of Bulgarian nationals (Section 10). Clergymen who "act against the democratic institutions of the state" may be

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795 removed from office upon the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Section 12).

In financial matters, the annual budgets of the denominations must be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; "when necessary, the state may subsidize them (the denominations)" (Section 13). All financial, hierarchical or personal relations with institutions abroad must be conducted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Section 22 and 24).

The denominations are permitted to open schools for the training of ministers subject to control by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Section 14) but cannot maintain hospitals, orphanages and the like (Section 21). All messages, circular letters and publications issued by the denominations are subject to previous approval by the same Ministry which may stop such publications (Section 15).

An important feature of the new regime of denominational control is the registration of the governing bodies with the public authorities (Section 16). Furthermore, religious institutions established abroad cannot have subdivisions in the country; all such subdivisions are to be closed within one month from the promulgation of the law (Section 23). Within the same period the denominations must submit lists of their ministers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs which may request the dismissal of any one found objectionable (Section 31).

659 Thus, in a veiled but easily enforceable form, the law of 1949 established a complete control over religion by the state. By means of the various supervisory devices the authorities have the legal power to suppress, restrict, harrass or use the religious denominations, including the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as their policies may require.

671 2. Translation of the Law

Law Concerning Religious Denominations
(Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 48, March 1, 1949)

Section 1

The freedom of conscience and religion shall be guaranteed to every citizen of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Section 2

The religious denominations, as religious communities, shall be separated from the State.

They may freely exercise their religious rituals within the limits set by the Constitution and the laws of the country.

Section 3

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the traditional religion of the Bulgarian people associated with its history and has such form, contents and spirit that it may become the people's democratic church.

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Section 4

Nobody may be prosecuted or restricted in his civil or political rights, nor may he be relieved of the execution of his obligations imposed upon him by the laws of the country because he belongs to one or another denomination or for being registered as having no denomination. This rule applies to all the ministers of various denominations.

Section 5

The denominations may, in their organizational structure, ritual and services, be guided by their canons, dogmas and provisions of their statutes if these do not contradict the laws, public order, and good morals.

Section 6

A denomination shall be considered recognized and shall obtain the status of a legal entity from the date when its statute is approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. From that date on the status of legal entities shall be obtained also by the local subdivisions of the religious denominations.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs may withdraw a granted recognition indicating his reasons if the activities of a denomination violate laws, public order or good morals.

Section 7

The denominations may build and open for their needs prayer houses and exercise in them, publicly, religious rituals

671 and services.

Religious services and processions in the open air shall be subject to the general laws and administrative regulations.

Section 8

The denominations may convoke, for the whole country or for individual regions, councils, conferences, general meetings and the like which shall be subject to the general laws and administrative regulations.

Section 9

Every denomination shall have a leadership responsible to the state.

The statute of every denomination shall determine the management and representative agencies and the method by which they are elected or appointed.

The ministers of denominations which maintain canonical regulations with foreign countries may not exercise their office without prior approval granted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Section 10

Only persons who are Bulgarian nationals and who are honest, reliable and were not deprived of their rights by a final judgment of a court, may be ministers of denominations and officers of any denomination.

Section 11

The denominations may, in accordance with their canons and dogmas, establish disciplinary councils for their ministers

671 and other officers of the church. The organization and the rules of procedure shall be established in the statute concerning the particular religious denomination.

The imposition of a disciplinary penalty shall be invalid if it is contrary to the laws, public order or good morals.

Section 12

Clergymen and other officials who violate laws, the public order or good morals or act against the democratic institutions of the state may, in addition to other applicable penalties, be provisionally suspended or removed from office upon the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Suspension or removal from office shall be immediately carried out by the respective leadership of the religious denomination upon receiving the request from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. If a clergyman is not removed by the responsible leadership, he shall be removed by an administrative order.

Section 13

The religious denominations may collect revenues and make expenditures under budgets prepared in accordance with their statues. When necessary, the State may subsidize them.

The religious denominations must submit their budgets to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The financial activities of the religious denominations shall be subject to control by the governmental financial agencies.

Section 14

671 Each religious denomination may establish, with the permission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, secondary or higher religious schools for the training of ministers of religion.

The organization and the curriculum of the educational institutions shall be governed by a special regulation, approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The sending of young men to religious institutions abroad must be authorized by the Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Section 15

All agencies of the religious denominations shall be required to submit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in advance, their messages, their circular letters and all material of public importance issued by them.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs may stop the circulation or the carrying out of all messages, circular letters and other papers and publications contrary to the laws, public order, and good morals.

Section 16

The central directive agencies of the religious denominations must register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the directing organs of local subdivisions with the local People's Soviets, submitting a complete roster of their members.

Section 17

The Bulgarian language shall be used as the official

671 language in the relations between the religious denominations and the public authorities, as well as in the records of the religious denominations. In their relations with the faithful and in their services, another language may be used.

Section 18

Any references to the supreme government authority and its agencies may be made by the religious denominations in their various religious services and festivals only by using the wording approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Section 19

The religious denominations shall inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of their names, symbols, and the seals which they use.

Section 20

The formation of societies with moral purposes of a religious character, as well as the publication of material for religious education, shall be subject to the general laws and administrative directives.

The education and the organization of youth shall be carried on under the care of the government and shall not be within the province of the religious denominations and their ministers of religion.

Section 21

The denominations may not establish hospitals, orphanages, and similar institutions.

The existing institutions of that kind shall pass under

671 the control of the Ministry of Public Health or the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and their property shall become government property. The owners of the property shall receive a fair indemnity, to be determined by a commission appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and composed of a representative of the Ministry of Finances, and a representative of the People's Soviet in whose district the property is located.

An appeal from the decisions of the commission may be taken to the regional court whose decision shall be final.

Section 22

The religious denominations may maintain relations with religious denominations, departments, organizations, or official persons abroad only with the authorization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Section 23

The religious denominations or their subdivisions (orders, congregations, missions, and the like), established abroad, may not establish subdivisions (orders, missions, congregations, and the like) within the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Such subdivisions as now exist shall be closed within a month from the date on which the present law takes effect.

All property of the subdivisions to be closed under the preceding paragraph shall become government property with the payment of a fair indemnity, which shall be determined as established in Section 21 of the present law.

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Section 24

The religious denominations may recive financial assistance and gifts from abroad only with the authorization of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Section 25

Religious denominations which have property abroad shall be represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in all transactions involving that property. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall also protect the religious interests of Bulgarian citizens abroad.

Section 26

Any preaching of hatred on religious grounds by work, print, or other means shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine up to 10,000 leva.

Section 27

Whoever by force or threat, interferes with the religious practices of citizens or recognized denominations which are not prejudical to the laws, public order, or good morals shall be punished by imprisonment for a period up to one year.

Whoever forces anyone to participate in the religious practices of a denomination shall be subject to the same punishment.

Section 28

Whoever forms political organizations on a religious

671 basis and whoever by word, print, or any other means uses the church and religion for propaganda against the public authority and its undertakings shall be punished by imprisonment unless his act is subject to a more severe punishment.

Section 29

Any violation of the present law shall be punished, in addition to any punishment under any other law, by a fine up to 10,000 leva, which shall be imposed by a decision of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. An appeal from his decision may be taken under Chapter 5, volume VI, of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Section 30

All questions connected with the financial upkeep, as well as with the internal organization and management of the various religious denominations, insofar as they are not settled by the present law, shall be regulated in detail for each denomination by special statutes. These statutes shall be prepared by the heads of the various denominations in accordance with the laws of the Republic and shall be submitted, for approval, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within three months from the day on which the present law takes effect.

If the statute submitted for approval contains provisions contrary to the laws of the land, the public order or good morals, the Minister of Foreign Affairs may demand their omission. If the religious denomination fails to comply with that demand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs may refuse

671 to confirm the statute.

Section 31

Within a month from the date on which the present law takes effect, the central directive agency of each denomination must submit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rosters of their ministers and religious representatives; these may retain their positions if the Minister of Foreign Affairs raises no objection.

Objections may be raised against those ministers who do not fulfill the qualifications established by the present law.

Section 32

The present law repeals all legislation which contradicts it.

The carrying out of the present Ukase shall be entrusted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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V. Minority Denominations

There are four minority denominations in Bulgaria: Mohammedan, Jewish, Protestant and Catholic. Each has its religious communities, which are administered by a Central Authority established in Sofia, with the exception of the Protestants who are subdivided into several groups (Methodists, Baptist, Episcopal, Etc.), each with its own Administrative Authority.

A. Mohammedan Minority

Of the minority denominations the Mohammedan has been and is the most numerous. It numbers more than 600,000

795 faithful and is politically important because of its ties with Turkey. It must be noted, however, that since the Balkan War the Turkish population in Bulgaria has continously been emigrating to Turkey.

167 175 The emigration of the Moslem population from Bulgaria to Turkey began with the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Most of the Turks living in the cities left Bulgaria immediately. They were slowly followed by the peasant element. The Turkish Government did not encourage this emigration. Under Sultan Abdul Hamid's rule the Turkish authorities were always suspicious of Moslem immigrants from the newly-liberated countries where they had lived under much more liberal conditions and had learned to value freedom and rights - two things which were not allowed in the Turkish Empire. There was another for this attitude. Turkey was greatly interest in keeping abroad a large and compact Moslem minority. They remained under the religious rule of the Cheikh-ul-Islam of Constantinople and could be of invaluable assistance in a Bulgarian-Turkish conflict, as they could not fail to respond to the appeal of their religious leader. But with the gradual stabilization of the situation the religious fanaticism of these Moslems weakened, and the passive character of the Turkish race led them to become loyal subjects of the Bulgarian State.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 caused the disappearance of Turkey from Europe. World War I, following a year later, brought about the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire whose

ruins the Kemalist Republic was established in the Anatolian Highland which is the only truly Turkish region and cradle of the power of the Osmanli Turks. The wars produced a new trend of emigration among the Moslems in all Balkan States. This trend was particularly strong among the Turks in Macedonia and especially those civilians or military who had led the fight against the powerful Macedonian Revolutionary organization. As Mustafa Kemal's campanions in arms, they were given prominent positions in the People's Republican Party founded by him. Mustafa Kemal, having been the Turkish military attache to Sofia before becoming Turkey's liberator, enjoyed great prestige among the Moslem population in Bulgaria. His influence caused a flood of Turkish immigrants to turn to the newly-established Republic. As those immigrants were more civilized and educated than the backward Anatolian peasants, they rapidly took into their hands the rein of business, playing an increasingly important part in the economic and political life of Turkey. Even today, the market of Ankara is dominated by the immigrants from Bulgaria, and one can often hear the Bulgarian language spoken in the shops and stores of the capital.

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The immigration would have been much greater if Ataturk had not enforced his great social, political and cultural reforms which shocked the Moslem world at first and which the Moslems of the Balkan States refused to follow. These reforms had to do with the liquidation of the Caliphate, and consequently of the religious law (Sheriat), in civic matters, the abandonment of the fez (cap) for men and feredje

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(viel) for women, and the change from the Arabic to the Latin 167
alphabet. 175

These fundamental reforms provoked a schism at first, and for a long time Mustafa Kemal and his followers were 175
considered infidels by other Moslems. The Bulgarian Government, 563
keenly aware of the potential menace presented by the compact and numerous Turkish minority, was only too happy to exploit this schism, which caused the Turks in Bulgaria to turn away from Ankara and Constantinople.

Bulgaria refused to exert any pressure on the Moslem 659
minority to force it to organize its social and religious life 175
along the lines advocated by the Kemalists. The Moslems were 563
left entirely free to keep the Sheriat and the Arabic alphabet. 795
Nothing was changed in the Turkish clergy and schools in 793
Bulgaria. This was all the easier to effect because the separation of the Church and State, which is the core of the Kemalist reforms, had long been realized in Bulgaria by the very fact of the establishment of the Christian Bulgarian State side by side with an ethnically foreign Moslem minority.

Left entirely to itself, this minority, whose nationality and religion have always been scrupulously respected, organized itself on the basis of the Sheriat, which governed every phase of its civic and religious life, particularly in matrimonial matters - marriage and divorce (i. e., repudiation of the wife by the husband), as well as in the matters of inheritance.

This organization, which developed side by side with

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the Bulgarian State, was maintained by the Bulgarian authorities by means of the institution of the muftis, whose network covered all the Turkish-inhabited regions and which was centered at Sofia in the person of a Great Mufti, elected by the regional muftis. The Great Mufti was assisted by a Council elected by all the Moslems in the country. Thus, the Turkish minority not only enjoyed equal political rights with other citizens, but also was provided with a system of self-government concerning all matters regulated by the Sheriat. Such was the privileged position of the great Moslem community, which was able to support a considerable number of mosques (no less than two thousand) and schools (more than one thousand) and to publish several newspapers in its own language.

The Kemalists were extremely dissatisfied with this state of affairs. It frustrated the expansion of their reforms beyond the frontiers of Turkey. The Government in Sofia, however, took a firm stand and refused to change anything in the direction desired by Ankara. What was more, the Turks in Bulgaria, being a compact and a large group, were a source of votes for the politicians, who did much to raise their primitive standard of living. Great projects were carried out by the Bulgarian State over several years whose purpose it was to provide drinking water and irrigation for the arid region of Dobrudja (Northeastern Bulgaria) predominantly populated by Turks. [312]

B. Jewish Minority

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The Jews in Bulgaria numbered about 50,000 and came originally from Spain. Until the last war they lived in absolute liberty and enjoyed all the rights of Bulgarian citizens. The Jewish colony maintained about 30 synagogues, of which seven are in Sofia, three in Plovdiv, two in Pleven, one in Vidin, one in Vratza, etc., and a consistory composed of preeminent men, the most notable of whom was the great Rabbi Dr. Ehrenpreiss (actually residing in Stockholm). For more than fifteen years Dr. Ehrenpreiss made a center of his residence from which Hebrew culture was propagated not only in the Balkans but in Eastern Europe as well.

The Jews not only were not persecuted, but also enjoyed the sympathy of the local population. This explains the fact that, although not numerous, they controlled the greater part of Bulgarian commerce, both domestic and foreign. The relations between Bulgarians and Jews were excellent, and sometimes went even as far as inter-marriage. The wife of the last Bulgarian Minister to the United States, Dr. Kevorah, who is of Jewish descent, is a Bulgarian.

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This harmony was not disturbed even after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany when, under the influence of the new regime in the Reich, national-socialist and fascist groups were also organized in Bulgaria. These groups endeavored, among other things, to incite anti-Jewish feelings among the

local population. The most active of these groups in that respect was the nationalistic organization "National Defence", under the leadership of a reserve general. Now and then the members of that organization staged a raid on some Jewish shops in Sofia where there lived no less than 20,000 Jews. But these sorties usually provoked by some discourteous act of the Jewish merchants, or of his employees, towards their Bulgarian customers, were ostracized by the government.

The situation changed abruptly at the beginning of World War II when the victories of the German Army in France made Hitler the virtual master of Europe. Bulgaria could not but take into account this change, the more so since her government was obviously inclined toward Germany. King Boris, whose power knew no limit, appointed then to the Ministry of Interior an attorney, none too intelligent, but an ardent Germanophile, who began to apply the national-socialist principles in the country and especially the theory of the purity of the race, which was claimed to be endanged in Bulgaria too. The national-socialists were shocked by the great liberty which the Jews enjoyed in Bulgaria, and openly began to talk of its suppression. Under German pressure, the Bulgarian government began to restrict its Jewish citizens. In December 1940 it sponsored in the legislature and the latter voted a law on the "Defence of the Nation", which deprived the Jewish citizens of their liberty and made them a lower class of citizens. The Jews were deprived of the right to serve in

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government or public institutions and in the army; the right to own landed property and movie theaters, and the right to publish newspapers or to participate in their publication. The Jews were forbidden to marry Bulgarians or hire Bulgarian maids and the Jewish children were denied admission to Bulgarian schools. Jewish participation in commerce and industry was made proportional to the Jewish population. This was very difficult to establish and resulted, therefore, in numerous abuses. Provision was made for the forcible evacuation of the Jewish population from the capital to the country, so as to remove it from the sight of the Germans, who were preparing to enter Bulgaria. Jewish youngmen, who were forbidden to fulfill their military service together with their Bulgarian fellow citizens, were sent to serve in the labor detachments organized after the first world war when the subsequent peace treaty prohibited universal military training in Bulgaria, and the Bulgarians replaced it with the so-called labor service for the utilization of the conscripts for various public works, mainly road construction. This organization was maintained after the creation of a regular army and still exists. The fact that the Jews were drafted into the labor service did not indicate discrimination. Discrimination consisted of the creation of separate units for the Jews, which, of course, were treated more severely than the others.

Nobody was pleased by this law, inspired by the desire to disprove the reproaches which the Germans were making to the

government, and King Boris, after signing the law, preferred to suspend its application for six months with the hope that events would allow him to abandon it as an unnecessary measure against public opinion. The government confined itself to the mere registration of all Jewish property, movable and immovable. However, when the German Army entered Bulgaria in March 1941, and in April, crushed and occupied Yugoslavia and Greece, anti-Jewish legislation could no longer be deferred. Since King Boris disliked to sign outright discriminatory laws, a law was passed which authorized the Council of Ministers to issue decrees designed to settle the Jewish and related questions. Another law assessed a levy of 20 percent on all property of the Jews. A third law took away from the Jews the concessionnal pharmacies by obliging them to liquidate their business. (In Bulgaria pharmacies are opened only with a concession from the authorities which give these concessions under strict conditions, and for strictly limited sections of the community under state control.)

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Acting on the authority of the powers given him by the legislature, the Council of Ministers established a special Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, which was given extensive powers, and which was placed under the direction of one of the most embittered persons in the country, acting in close cooperation with the German Legation in Sofia. It was this Commissariat which introduced the regime of limitations for the Jews who were required to sell all apartments and houses not used as personal residences; i.e., those which were rented, as well as the stock piles of various articles which they had

hoarded at the beginning of the war. The Jews were required to entrust the Bulgarian National Bank with all their valuables, stocks, bonds, and insurance policies, and to liquidate their participation in various commercial and industrial enterprises. Property owned by Bulgarian Jews living abroad was simply seized. In the field of liberal professions, only 53 Jews were admitted to free practice, of which 21 were attorneys, 21 physicians, 7 dentists, 3 chemists, and 1 architect; most of them were allowed to practice because they were either decorated war veterans or converts to Christianity. Special identification cards were issued to Jews, and in order to distinguish them from Bulgarians, they were forced to wear on the lapels of their coats a yellow star of David (foreign Jews and war veterans were to wear red circles). Jewish radio and telephone receivers were often abused by the pro-German part of the population; but they never lost the sympathy of the people who knew that all of this was due to the Germans.

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In Macedonia, which was occupied by Bulgarian troops but under German rule, the situation was slightly different. There were not many Jews there; they were assembled in one place, not in a concentration camp, as such a thing did not exist, but in a little town from where the Germans, one night in 1942, deported them without even informing the Bulgarian authorities, and transported them to Poland in closed freight cars.

The Germans could not treat the Bulgarian Jews in the

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same way; but they were determined to deport them with the consent of the government. To this effect they recived the cooperation of the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs and signed with the latter a formal agreement, which was ratified by the Council of Ministers, and according to which the government agreed to hand over to the German Government a certain number of Bulgarian Jews. This agreement was published by the press after a change in the government took place, but at the time it was kept strictly secret. The Jews, however, learned that they were to be sent to ~~the~~ German concentration camps and frenziedly began to look for protection. A spontaneous outburst of protests arose among the Bulgarian population, which had been badly rattled by the passage through the country of the freight trains loaded with the Macedonian Jews on its way to Romania. By the sickening scenes of the conditions of their transportation, the impression made by this action was shocking, and when it was learned that the same fate was reserved for the Bulgarian Jews, the whole country rose in a wave of protests which was expressed in thousands of letters addressed to the Court, imploring insistingly, and some even menacingly, the Head of the State to prevent this shame. The frothing created was such that the King saw himself obliged to emerge from his passiveness and to warn the Germans discreetly, but firmly, that he was not responsible for the order and the peace in the country if they continued this action. The Germans understood the warning and forsook the deportation of the Jews from Bulgaria. Instead, they

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deported the Jews en masse from Sofia forcibly to two main Jewish centers in the country, namely, the towns of Pleven and Vratza. There the Jews lived unmolested until the Coup d'Etat of September 9, 1944, when the new government immediately restored them to their former status. Thus, the Bulgarian Jews, although they suffered material and moral damages, were saved from destruction, contrary to what happened in some of the other countries occupied by Germany.

The new government repealed all anti-Jewish legislation; all the seized or sequestered property was returned to the Jewish owners. A special decree-law was promulgated for "the settlement of the consequences of the revocation of anti-Jewish legislation affecting private property." The Jews were given full satisfaction. This was at the beginning. No laws or decrees were disclosed which would discriminate against the Jews or restrict the exercise of Jewish faith. However, the general program of nationalization of industry and commerce affected strongly the source of livelihood of many Jews in Bulgaria. Once the government had nationalized all the commerce and all the industry of the country, most of the Jews were deprived of the exercise of their trade. Since 1947, they have been emigrating en masse to Palestine. According to a letter from Israel, published in the organ of the Bulgarian National Committee "Free and Independent Bulgaria" of October 28, 1949, there already are 40,000 Bulgarian Jews in Israel, and there are only about 8,000 Jews left in Bulgaria, which are awaiting their turn to leave, with the exception of 2,000 to 3,000 at the most who are

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tied to the Communist Party and the present government. It is, 563 167
therefore, not to be expected that they will leave Bulgaria. It must be noted, however, that by means of this organized emigration to the State of Israel, the Russians, who are the masters in Bulgaria, have succeeded in sending there a rather large number of communists and they played an important part in that country in favor of a pro-soviet orientation.

C. Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church was one of the most influential 795 although Roman Catholics were not numerous in Bulgaria. Indeed, 175 Catholicism penetrated Bulgaria as early as the XVII century. It did not come directly from Rome, but through the intermediary of the then powerful Austrian monarchy, which sought to expand into Southeastern Europe and which, in order to realize the goals of that policy, was promising the Bulgarian people to liberate them from the Turkish rule at a time when Russia had not yet entered the International arena.

The pioneers of that denomination were then Bulgarian merchants with connections abroad who often visited the Dalmatian port Dubrovnik (Raguza), an important cultural center at the time. There they were won to the idea of the liberation of Bulgaria with the help of Catholic Austria, an idea encouraged by the Vatican authorities, and they frequented Vienna and Rome for political conferences. Such merchants came mostly from the small but rich town Tchiprovtsi, in the present region of Vratsa,

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in northwestern Bulgaria. Consequently, Catholicism spread in the region and town of Plovdiv, in southern Bulgaria. These are the two main Catholic centers in Bulgaria to which Sofia must be added not because it has a large Catholic population, but because the old King Ferdinand was Catholic and favored Catholicism. There were, therefore, two Catholic Churches in Sofia. Also, the Catholic Bishop, religious head of all, though no numerous, Bulgarian Catholics, had his seat there where the Pope likewise maintained an Apostolic Nuncio as his representative to the Bulgarian Government and the Bulgarian court.

Another Catholic current penetrated the Bulgarian provinces during the second half of the XIV century, this time via Constantinople. This was at the time when the Bulgarian nation was engaged in the fight for its religious emancipation. The country had already been convinced that liberation was going to come only from Russia, but Russian diplomacy at first refused to support the demand for the creation of an autonomous Bulgarian Church. It threatened to cause a schism in the Orthodox world because of the uncompromising attitude of the Constantinople Patriarchate, which insisted on its ecumenical. Jurisdiction as opposed to the national principle in religious affairs. In view of this situation a certain number of Bulgarians reacted to that opposition by soliciting the protection of the Vatican in the hope that this protection would help to draw the attention of Europe and induce it to take an interest in the fate of the Bulgarian people and also expedite their religious and political liberation.

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Thus, in 1859, the inhabitants of the Macedonian towns of Doiran and of Kukush (Kilkish), north of Salonika, now in Yugoslav and Greek lands, respectively, left the Patriarchate to form a Bulgarian Uniate Church which registered some gains in Macedonia and Thrace, particularly in Adrianople, between 1860 - 1870, before the Bulgarian Exarchate was established. In these two regions the Vatican appointed bishops for the dioceses which were established there, and toward the end of that decade, a young Bulgarian patriot, Dragan Tzankoff, who later was to play a considerable part in the political life of the Principedom of Bulgaria at the head of the liberal party, began serious negotiations with the Vatican for the incorporation of the entire Bulgarian nation into the Roman Church as a Uniate Church. A Uniate Archbishopric was established, but proved to be of short life. The Turkish government authorized rather the establishment of the Exarchate as the Bulgarian National Church.

The Bulgarian Uniates, like the Uniates in the Ukraine and in Byelorussia, constituted a special branch of Catholics. They preserved the dogmas and rituals and other religious rules of the Eastern Church, but accepted the supreme authority of the Pope, praying for him during the Mass and mentioning him as the supreme church authority instead of the Patriarch, and later, the Exarch.

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The Uniate movement was centered around Salonika and directed from Constantinople. It rendered great services to the Bulgarian population in Macedonia and Thrace under the

796 Ottoman Empire. Its influence was greatest in the vilayet
797 (province) of Salonika. A great cathedral was erected in that city in 1878 to replace the little chapel which had until then served the small Catholic community. The same soon took place in Adrianople. The Uniate communities of these two cities, with the authorization of the Turkish authorities and the material support of the Vatican, founded primary and secondary schools for their children. These schools helped considerably the Bulgarian population, exposed immediately after the Russo-Turkish War of 1878 to the double persecutions by the Greek clergy, who were trying to detach it from the Exarchate. The Catholic educational institutions educated a great number of indigent children who later made powerful contributions to the cultural progress of the Bulgarian Nation.

Several religious missions came to these regions from Rome, and, once established, did some beneficial work. Two of them particularly distinguished themselves. One was the Order of St. Vincent of Paul of the Brothers and Sisters of Charity, which acquired the estate of Zeitinlik, two kilometers from the Varder Gate of Salonika, on the road to Serres and where they erected the vast buildings of the "Bulgarian Catholic School of St. Cyril and Methodius", circled by a great wall; the other was the school of the two italian clerics, Brother Guiseppe Aleati and Sister Christne Aleati, of Turin, who, in 1892, bought a large farm, near the village of Palortzi, in the region of Ghevgheli, in Macedonia, actually located on the Greek-Yugoslav border on which they founded an orphanage with a convent school for nurses and one for home economics, and

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where many Bulgarian children of Southern Macedonia found asylum, especially after the great insurrection of August 1903. After the Balkan War, which Bulgaria fought for the liberation of her national territories of Macedonia and Thrace from Turkish rule, but which ended disastrously for her, these two important centers of education for the Bulgarian youths were suppressed, the school buildings and their grounds having been seized by the Greek and Serbian authorities, which likewise forced all other Bulgarian schools under their jurisdiction to be closed. This brutal occupation was resented by the local population, and many disgraceful scenes took place, such as the suppression of the school in Palortzi. The order stated that instructions be changed from the Bulgarian to the Serbian language; Father and Sister Aloati declared that when they established the school, they had found nothing but Bulgarian children in that region and that, for this reason, they could not fail in their duty to teach these children in their own Bulgarian language. This courageous declaration was unanimously supported by the students, who declared that they were Bulgarians and that they had no desire to learn the Serbian language. The order to change the language which was repeated several times was not carried out. One day a detachment of Serbian police invaded the grounds of the school with the official notice that either the curriculum was going to be Serbianized, or the school was to be evacuated immediately. The teachers and students remained firm in their attitude and preferred

exile to renunciation of the Bulgarian character of the school. With their few belongings that they managed to salvage, they sought refuge in Bulgaria. 795 797 563

The Uniate movement did not expand after the establishment of the Exarchate in 1871 and the creation of a Bulgarian State in 1879. The towns of Adrianople and Kukash were devastated and almost destroyed by the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913. Turkey and Greece soon thereafter expelled most of the Bulgarian population of these regions. The Uniates among them were dispersed throughout Bulgaria and disappeared as an organized religious community. 795 175

Between the two world wars a powerful Catholic action was begun by Italy in the Balkans and particularly in Bulgaria. This action was carried out by a special religious organization called "Pro Oriente". It did not, however, pursue religious aims but pure Italian propaganda and there is beyond the scope of this report.

The foreign denominations, however, have even enjoyed the greatest freedom in Bulgaria, this freedom being consecrated by the Constitution itself (see supra) and were under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which also took care of the ecclesiastic affairs of the Bulgarian Church. The Constitution of 1879 had created in this Ministry a bureau in charge of the denominations. 656

The need for a special law for the foreign denominations was not even felt under the pre-war regime. Such a law was not 671

promulgated until 1949. Sections 5, 7-15, 17, 18, 20-24, 28, 671
30, and 31 of this law especially affect the Roman Catholic Church.

D. Protestant Church

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The activities of the Protestant Churches are described in more detail in Appendix B. No law was disclosed which would specifically regulate the position of the Protestant Church in Bulgaria. The activity of this church was primarily educational, that is, the Protestants opened and conducted several private schools in Bulgaria. They did not come under some special denominational churches which were treated like any other private schools. For this reason such activities are being reported in a separate appendix to this digest, which is primarily designed to give a picture of the legal status of the church.

APPENDIX A

to Chapter IV

Elections of the Exarch in Detail

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The eledtion of the Exarch was performed by a body consisting of both the representatives of the clergymen and the laymen parishioners. The mandates of some of these representatives of the clergymen and the laymen parishioners. The mandates of some of these representatives elected before expired in some dioceses but they were extended by government decree because the Diet (Sobranie, Decree having Force of Law [671] for the Extension of the Mandates of the Lay and the Ecclesiastic Electors within each Diocese under Article 59 of the Statute of the Exarchate, Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 9, January 12, 1945). Since, furthermore, the Statute required the participation of the President and of the Vice-Presidents of the Diet which had been dissolved, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution replacing these two delegates with three representatives of the Fatherland Front coalition, because of the impossibility of holding legislative elections (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 9, January 12, 1945).

Needless to say, the representatives of the Fatherland Front played the most important part in the election.

The Communists had no use for an Exarch. They agreed to the election only under pressure from the other members of the coalition and under the expressed condition that the latter would, on their part, agree to the immediate introduction of

793 civil marriage asoobligatory, regardless of the Church's stand. That step was taken four months later.

There had always been three candidates to the Exarch's Tiara: Archbishop Stefan of Sofia, who had served as Archimandrite under the late Exarch Joseph, whose name and memory are worshipped in all Bulgarian lands; Archbishop Paissy of Vratza, who almost had himself elected during the war with the support of the Germans; and Archbishop Antim of Vidin, who, for a great number of years, had presided over the sessions of the Holy Synod, whose president, the Exarch, is ex officio.

Owing to the international situation of the country at the time under full soviet occupation, it could not be a question of electing Paissy and his candidacy was tacitly eliminated. There remined the choice between Antim and Stefan. The former had his longtime presidency of the Synod to his credit, while the latter enjoyed a certain priority under a general recommendation incorporated in the statute of the Exarchate in 1921. This recommendation stated that the new Exarch had to be the Archbishop of Sofia from which one may conclude that the Archbishop of Sofia would be the new Exarch. This was designed to facilitate the election of Mgr. Stefan as the candidate of the government at the time against Mgr. Antim, who, politically related to the radical party, was considered as a leftwinger and consequently as inacceptable to the dictatorship.

But during the war, Mgr. Stefan, being an ardent Russophile, took a stand in favor of the allies and later, of the U.S.S.R.. This immediately brought him in close comtact with the opposition, especially with the group Zveno and the Military League whose anti-governmental activities was encouraged by him. This also brought him closer to the soviets whose anti-religious policy he had criticized before the war. When the Patriarchate was restored in Russia, in 1943, he no longer had any reservation toward Moscow. When, in the fall of 1944, the coalition of the Fatherland Front was being formed, Mgr. Stefan adhered to it quite openly and in this quality was kept informed of all preparations for the Coup d'Etate of September 9, 1944, when Mgr. Antim remained loyal to the end to the national government and kept himself out of any active participation in politics.

Thus, Stefan was nominated by the Fatherland Front with the tacit consent of the Communists, who had little confidence in him. But on the one hand, they were not at all interested in the internal affairs of the Church and on the other hand, did not feel strong enough as yet to dictate to their partners concerning such matters. In January 1945, the Archbishop of Sofia was elected Exarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The new Exarch was a political, rather than a religious figure. He demonstrated it the day of his election in the address which he made during the service at which he officiated,

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assisted by the other Archbishops, in the renovated old church of St. Sophia, dating back to Byzantine times. He presented himself as the choice of the Fatherland Front, which he defended and to whom he swore fealty, so to speak, before a numerous and well-selected audience from which the government was conspicuously absent. The communists had insisted on that latter point, not trusting the new Exarch's Anglo-Saxon sympathies. Stefan, who was a staunch anti-bolshevik before the war, had many ties in the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastic world and had been very active in the international organization, "Peace through Faith". Such activities could not but arouse the suspicion of the Bulgarian members of the Comintern. Furthermore, there is the prelate's political past. In 1934, he, in order to improve his position, supported the anti-royalist coup carried out by the group Zveno and the Military League. Then, when the King succeeded in liquidating the rebels and in establishing his own dictatorship, Mgr. Stefan went over to the Head of the State and thus acquired an omnipotent position with the Bulgarian Church. During the entire duration of the Royal dictatorship, he did not cease to uphold the cause of the Russian refugees in Bulgaria against the Moscow Government, attacking the latter in numerous articles, approved and even inspired by the Council of Ministers. Finally, the events of the second world war caused a general desertion of the sovereign; Mgr. Stefan, who hated him, abandoned him to seek the support of King Boris' sworn enemies, the group Zveno and the Military League. These elements had begun to prepare a new rebellion

long before the King's death, which occured in 1943. With such a past, he could hardly hope to gain the confidence of the communists. But, thinking himself a great politician, he hoped to be able to manouver with the communists as he had done with his sovereign, from whom he had once hoped to be called upon to preside over the destinies of the nation.

However, after his election, he did take two intelligent and timely steps. On the one hand, the Patriarchate of Constantinople having renewed the advances which it had been making for some years toward the removal of the schism separating it from the Bulgarian Church, and these advances being favorably regarded by the Russian Patriarchate and by the Soviet Government, he interceded before the Fatherland Front in favor of and succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a delegation which would engage the necessary negotiations. As chariman of the delegation, he appointed a Macedonian prelate, the Archbishop of Nevrokop, Mgr. Boris (later assassinated by a communist priest of his diocese), who was to be assisted by Mgr. Andrcij, Bishop of the Bulgarians in America, who was then temporarily in charge of the ghost of an Exarchate which Bulgaria was maintaining in Constantinople. And on the other hadn, without waiting for the results of the negotiations, he went to Moscow to pay his respects to the Russian Patriarch Alexis and to place himself at the latter's disposal. This was in accordance with the international mission which the Politbureau has assigned to the Russian Orthodox Church, namely, the restoration of the former Russian influence, both religious and political, in the Middle and Near East. The lifting of the Greek-Bulgarian schism was a part of this program. In keeping with his

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ambitious nature, Mgr. Stefan wanted to play an important part in that scheme. That is why he offered his services to Alexis, whom he charmed and in whose person, moreover, he wanted to have a champion among the communists. Nevertheless, in doing so, he was also following the tradition established during the long period of the schism when the Russian Church had always supported the Bulgarian Church, for which the Bulgarians were quite thankful.

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Alexis was soon to visit the Holy Land, and Stefan, who would have to pay a visit to the Patriarch in Constantinople after the lifting of the schism, suggested that that visit coincide with that of his big brother, on the latter's return from the Holy Land, in such fashion that the two would meet in Constantinople as guests of the Ecumenical Patriarch and affirm a soviet moral protectorate over the Eastern Orthodox Christians in the Orient, which was to facilitate the expansion of soviet political influence.

This scheme failed. The Turkish Government was highly disturbed by the announcement of Alexis' journey; and the Constantinople Patriarchate, fearing the consequences of the projected visit, asked the Moscow Patriarch to postpone it.

This was all taking place while the political group, known as the E.A.M. in Greece, which was communist dominated, still had hopes of seizing power through peaceful means, with the active support of the U.S.S.R., of course.

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The negotiations with the Greek Patriarchate, which

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The negotiations with the Greek Patriarchate, which A7
although still called "Ecumenical", actually was reduced to a few dioceses in and around Constantinople, were carried on rather smoothly. The reconciliation of the two rival churches had been in preparation for a long time by the march of the events. The rivalry itself had no foundation any more. The defeat of the Greek expeditionary forces at the hands of Kemal Ataturk in their attempt at restoring the Byzantine Empire of the old days had had, as a consequence, the disappearance of Greek religious supremacy in the Orthodox world. As to the Bulgarians, the loss of Thrace and Macedonia had left them little to dispute about with the Patriarchate of Phanar. Moreover, the Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastic quarrel was far less of a dogmatic nature than that of a political nature, and one may even say, a purely administrative one.

In effect, the canons of the Orthodox faith forbade the presence of two religious leaders of the same denomination in one town. It is on the basis of that rule that the Patriarchate had opposed, in 1871, the establishment of the See of the Bulgarian Exarch in Constantinople. However, at that time all Bulgarian lands were still under Ottoman rule, and there was no other place the Exarchate could go and still be in direct contact with the Turkish Government as its capital. Since that period, things have changed radically, and now there is no need for the presence of the Bulgarian Exarch in Constantinople. Furthermore, the Patriarchate was willing to recognize the complete independence of the Bulgarian Church, which it

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was ready to proclaim autocephalous under an Exarch or a Patriarch, as the Bulgarians would have it.

On such a basis, an agreement was soon reached, and on February 23, 1945, a protocol was signed by the Patriarch and the Bulgarian delegates, and ratified by the Holy Synods of the two churches. The schism separating the Bulgarian Church from the Patriarchate since 1871 was eliminated.

This result was greatly facilitated by the favorable attitude of Patriarch Benjamine himself. Sensing the end of his days was drawing nearer, he was determined to carry out the task of reconciliation and pacification before his death. He came from the southern part of Macedonia (incorporated into Greece in 1913), and there are good reasons to consider him as a Bulgarian. He had not lost his national feeling and wanted to express that feeling by taking the intiative of the rapprochement between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. His moral strength is all the more outstanding in view of his weak physical condition. The Apostolic Nuncio in Constantinople has said of him and his ideal: "that old man rises above the contingencies of everyday life in the pursuit of a great ideal in the service of God and of Humanity."

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The protocol of February 23 was to receive a solemn confirmation by a visit of Exarch Stefan to Patriarch Benjamin. that visit was delayed by events until the second half of October 1945. In the meantime, the Patriarch suffered two heart attacks, and the composition of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate had

been altered by one of the periodical re-shufflings, which had removed precisely the most zealous supporters of the reconciliation. The Patriarch had enough strength to impose the continued adherence to the decisions which had been made, but the atmosphere was not at all the same. Stefan's visit to Alexis and the fact that he arrived in Constantinople (Istanbul) as it were directly from Moscow, were widely exploited to cause alarm and suspicion in the old Ottoman capital where a Russian-Bulgarian maneuver aimed at gaining moral control of the city was always feared. These fears were tacitly shared by the Turkish Government, and consequently, there were many obstacles to be removed. Nevertheless, Mgr. Stefan's visit was very successful in the outcome. 795 798 648

Sofia tried to exploit that success and to widen the work of reconciliation to the peoples themselves, and not only to the churches. On October 30, 1945, Exarch Stefan handed to the Patriarch a short memorandum, in which the Bulgarian Government was asking the Patriarch to intercede before the Regent of Greece, Mgr. Damaskinos, in favor of the normalization of Greek-Bulgarian relations. Bulgaria decalred her readiness to repair all damages effectively caused by Bulgarian occupation authorities, taking into consideration, however, the public utility projects which the Bulgarians had undertaken in Greece. Bulgaria asserted that she had no purpose other than to establish friendly conditions of cooperation between the two countries. 648

To that Mgr. Damaskinos, then head of the Greek State, gave an evasive reply. He approved the lifting of the schism

but refused to let himself be drawn into political matters by his religious superior. Besides, the latter died three months later, and his healthy influence on Greek-Bulgarian political reconciliation ceased. The U.S.S.R. supported this reconciliation very energetically, as the E.A.M., the Greek equivalent of the Bulgarian Fatherland Front, still thought it had a good chance of seizing power by peaceful means after its rebellion in the fall of 1944 had been bloodily and decisively repressed. The maneuver, if it had been successful, would probably have been of profit to the E.A.M.. But it would also have helped Greece and prevented the booodshed of the three following years. In any event its failure caused the Soviet Government and the Bulgarian Communists to scrap the ecclesiastic policy which they had drawn up in 1944, and the central figure in which had been Mgr. Stefan. The latter immediately lost all the value which he had held for the communists which would enable him to maintain some independence of action as Head of the Bulgarian Church. Now the communists no longer had any use for him and still had all the old reasons to distrust him because of his autoritarian attitude.

In effect, his election to the Exarchate and his visit to Istanbul had inflated his ego to a point where he began to believe that he had become a great factor in the life of the country, and he wanted to play a part proportionate to that importance. But, since it was the Fatherland Front who had elected him, he was confronted with overgrowing demands from the

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government, which intended to make the Church its tool, both in and out of the country, when it was rapidly becoming the center of opposition, especially after the suppression of the political opposition in the Sobranie. To these demands, Mgr. Stefan had to give satisfaction, albeit half-heartedly, and in so doing, he provoked the ire of both the clergy and the people. On the other hand, to complicate things further, he took a dim view of the activities of the Holy Synod, and wanted to decide everything alone.

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Thus, while he was in Istanbul, he informed Patriarch Benjamin of his intention to proclaim himself Patriarch in 1917 and invited him to send delegates to attend the ceremonies which he planned. In this he acted without consulting either the government of the Synod, and, quite naturally, both protested when he returned to Bulgaria and declared that they disagreed with him, and that they considered the transformation of the Exarchate into a Patriarchate an untimely step. The conflict which opposed him to the government on the one hand, and to the Holy Synod on the other hand, went from bad to worse, especially after the separation of Church and State had been decreed officially by the adoption of the new Constitution at the end of 1947. Mgr. Stefan thus literally found himself between the hammer and the anvil. Moreover, because of his personally aggressive attitude towards the other prelates, which made him attempt to dictate to his friends and to crush his opponents, the two forces finally joined against him. On

September 6, 1948, following an incident with the communists, he saw himself placed in the position where he had to hand in his resignation to the Holy Synod which accepted it unanimously with the support of the government, which did nothing to prepare for the election of a new Exarch. The Holy Synod, taking full charge again of the Church, did more than accept the resignation of Mgr. Stefan. By applying the last amendment of the Statute of the Exarchat (Durzhaven Vestnik, No. 108, May 12, 1945) which definitely linked the office of the Exarch with that of the Archbishop Primate of Sofia, it deprived him of his diocese, reserved for the new Exarch, and relegated him as a virtual prisoner to the surroundings of the small provincial town of Karlovo, where the government permitted him to establish himself in a castle which had once been the property of the late King Boris. His health, by the way, was particularly precarious. 793 795

The decision of the Holy Synod really amounts to a deposition of the Exarch, rather than as an acceptance of his resignation. It was the revenge of the Synod, whom Mgr. Stefan had systematically ignored in his ambition to arrive at a personal and arbitrary rule over the Church, contrary to the very spirit of the Statute of the Exarchate, which had established the Bulgarian Church on an essentially democratic and national basis.

APPENDIX B

to Chapter V

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Activities of the Protestant Churches in Bulgaria

(Report prepared by Mrs. M. C. Markham from "The Story of the American Board" by William E. Strong. 1910; "Valorous Ventures" by Mary Isham, Methodist Women's Board and Personal Experiences.)

Protestantism came into Bulgaria through Boston. It came at the time when Bulgaria was still a part of European Turkey. It was brought in by American missionaries who received their inspiration and religious fervor during the time of the religious revival in America, following shortly after the Revolutionary War in the United States of America.

So, in 1810, there was organized in Boston, Massachusetts, the A.B.C.F.M., or the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for the purpose of sending missionaries to carry the gospel to the world.

From the beginning the Board had its eye on the Holy Land. It seemed intolerable to its founders that Christianity's birthplace should be forever in the grip of Islam, or left to the lifeless form of Christianity then found in Palestine.

The first attempts at missionary work in Turkey were not directed especially toward the Mohammedans nor to the Oriental Christians, but to the Jews when in 1819 the first two workers were sent to work in Turkey. At first they settled in Smyrna.

They were sent with the purpose of surveying the field

to see what could be done. They felt the field was a great challenge, for at that time the Turkish Empire was vast and covered almost every land named in Bible history. It extended also into Europe--into Greece and the Balkan Provinces.

They found there were 40,000,000 people crowded together and yet separated by irreconciliable differences of race and religion and embittered by years of controversy and warfare.

Except in coastal cities there were scarcely any educated men; the women were uniformly illiterate. There was no literature, apparently no desire for it, under the oppressive hand of the sultan-caliph at Constantinople.

The early missionaries in Turkey worked with great endurance, persistence and devotion, suffering much from the primitive conditions in the country. They made careful investigations and did a great deal of exploring before planting their mission stations.

In 1830 some American Board missionaries set up a station at Constantinople for the Spanish Jews. They definitely stated then that they came as helpers, not as antagonists, of the Armenians and church. They hoped to "redeem that church to a more vital religion".

In 1840 a small boarding school for boys and young men started in Bebek - Constantinople - by Cyrus Hamlin. This school later developed into a theological school to train preachers. In 1862 circumstances made great changes in the

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school. By this time the missionaries felt their theological training school should be more available for Asiatic Turkey and away from a big city. Therefore, the theological school was moved into Asia Minor. About the same time, in 1863, a Mr. Christopher R. Robert of New York, was urging Dr. Hamlin to found a Christian college to furnish higher education for all races in the Turkish Empire. So in 1863 the Robert College was founded, which was to educate and train future Bulgarians.

In 1845 a girls' boarding school was started by the missionaries in Constantinople with two pupils. This later became the well-known and important "American College for Girls at Constantinople", in 1872.

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Many Armenians became attracted to the new form of Christianity and after some time the Orthodox Armenians began severe persecution of their "evangelicals" and finally resorted to excommunication. This treatment caused the organization of the first Protestant Church on July 1, 1846, in Constantinople.

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The American Board began its work in European Turkey in 1858. For some time attention had been turned to this part of the Empire as a strategic missionary field.

Dr. Hamlin of the school at Bebek, on a visit to England in 1856, enlisted the substantial aid of friends there, notably the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Turkish Missions Aid Society in the needy and important lands which Turkey held in Europe.

It was felt that in this middle ground between East

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and West, where 4,000,000 Moslems were in close contact with western civilization and where also various Christian sects touched western Christianity, there was a field not to be passed over in my effort to carry the gospel into Asia.

Moreover, "the Bulgarians, the leading race in the Balkans, ambitious, progressive, and liberty-loving, made a particular appeal to the sympathies of the civilized world". (The Story of the American Board by William B. Strong).

In 1857 Dr. Hamlin, with a representative of the Turkish Missions Aid Society, made a tour of investigation into European Turkey and brought back a glowing report. They found "a people poor and ignorant indeed, yet thrifty and eager for learning".

By an understanding with the Methodist Episcopal Church North, of America, the American Board - Congregationalist - took its share of the land to be cultivated, the region south of the Balkans, placing its first missionaries at Adrianople.

Plovdiv was made the second station.

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The missionaries were brave, enthusiastic, gifted men and women. Their school for girls in Stara Zagora and the school for young men at Plovdiv prospered and encouraged the missionaries. But there were discouraging experiences too; influential parents at Stara Zagora withdrew their daughters when they understood the Protestant character of the school, and in 1867 a mob attacked the school and would have carried off the scholars but for the coolness and vigor of Mr. Morse in withstanding them.

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Here an appeal to the new law of religious liberty in Turkey, together with the help of friendly officials brought good results even from persecution. 797 798

One of the best-known contributions of the Prostestants to Bulgaria began as a little mission school for young men in 1860. It was called "The Collegiate and Theological Institute" and started with four pupils. It was shifted to several locations ans was closed temporarily during troublesome times, but was finally reestablished in 1871 at Samokov. The mission school for girls was also moved to Samokov that same year. 797

Samokov was chosenans a more promising town at that time. The climate was much better than in the hot district around Plovdiv. There were still no railroads in the country, and Sofia was an insignificant little place. There were prospering iron mines at Samokov and the place seemed one that would grow in the future.

Both boarding schools increased in attendance and in influence.

On June 30, 1871, the initial annual meeting of the European Turkey Mission was held at Stara Zagora. To this meeting the scholarly Dr. Riggs of Constamtinople brought the first bound volume of theBulgarian Bible. At this meeting the "European Turkey Mission" was organized. It was the first mission of the Board that, from the beginning, had the Bible in the language which the people could understand.

In 1871 the first evangelical church in Macedonis was organized at Bansko 795

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organized at Bansko.

In 1875 the Bulgarian Evangelical Society, a native agency, was organized. This Society has been an important part of the Protestant work in Bulgaria. It was run by Bulgarians, distributed religious literature and tracts, Sunday school literature; it helped the native churches, and in recent times had taken over the publishing and editing of the Bulgarian religious weekly, "The Zornitsa", which was started missionaries in Constantinople, in 1871, where there was a Bulgarian printing press belinging to the Missions.

These were fearful times when Bulgaria became a separate principality through insurrection and war. The mission work suffered. The horrible massacres of the revolution and the ravages of the Russo-Turkish War spread terror and tumult through the land. Regular mission work was suspended in the most part; people hid in the mountains; missionary families left for Constantinople; Stara Zagora was destroyed; Samokov was threatened. Turkish officers and neighbors protected the missionaries and saved Samokov.

After the calamity, the missionaries became very efficient ministers of relief. As always in such times, they collected and distributed funds and relief in large quantities.

In spite of the troublesome times there was an era of advance in the European Turkey Mission after the first 15 years of its life.

During the decade 1877-87 the missionary advance

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among the Bulgarians was rapid, judged by such tokens as increase in numbers, contributions of native Christians, the appearance of able native Christians, and the development of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society.

There were obstacles for the mission work too, because the Bulgarians hesitated in coming out for the new church. They felt it was disloyal to accept anything which discredited their state church; also there was much irreligion appearing with the new political freedom.

With all of this, though, many people who were educated in the mission schools and at Robert College and the Women's College at Constantinople admit their indebtedness to these schools.

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With all of this, though, many people who were educated in the mission schools and at Robert College and the Women's College at Constantinople admit their indebtedness to these schools.

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When a new church building was dedicated in Sofia, the capital, in 1888, one of the large audience was Prince Ferdinand, who on leaving presented the church with 500 francs as a token of good will.

During this period there was some hindrance to the work, especially in Macedonia, by the feuds between the races which resulted in frequent outbreaks.

In 1896 when war broke out between the Turks and the Greeks, Salonika and Monastir (Bitolia) were the centers of

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activity and the mission work was again disturbed.

This was a period when the religious literature was very much in demand in Macedonia. There was much unrest among the people, great eagerness for liberty and comparative seclusion from the world, so that the mountain people were especially attracted to the religious tracts.

On September 3, 1901, in the mountains of Macedonia, near the Bulgarian border, a comitadji band fell upon a group of Christian workers and carried off for ransom Miss Ellen Stone and Mrs. Tsilka, the wife of a Bulgarian preacher. The story of this event is well known. After 172 days in captivity in the mountains near Bansko, the two women and the baby, born in captivity, were set free upon payment of a ransom of $68,200. The comitadji band turned out to revolutionary leaders.

There were turbulent times in Macedonia, but the missionaries remained at their posts and their little schools, churches, and their pastoral visiting continued in spite of all difficulties.

The missionaries were unable to distribute much relief to those about them during this period.

In 1898 the publishing department was transferred from Constantinople to Samokov. A special missionary was appointed to have charge of this work and the "Zornitsa", which had been suspended for a short time because of the lack of funds was resumed. It was thought better that this work should be done on Bulgarian soil.

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After World War I this missionary, with a committee of scholars, revised the Bulgarian Bible.

Later on, a new Hymn book was published for the use of the schools and churches.

The schools at Samokov had grown and in the early 1900's they were feeling the need for new equipment. New buildings were put up for them, as well as for church meeting hourses in the villages.

There was a call for better-trained preachers, so the staff was increased in the schools, and some young men were sent abroad to study.

It was during this time that the well-known kindergarten work of Miss Clarke was started in Sofia. It was pioneering work, but she trained many of Bulgaria's kindergarten teachers.

During the time of the Balkan Wars the Protestant work in Bulgaria was well established. The churches in the villages were active and attracted much interest. There were churches in Sofia and Plovdiv and were well attended. The two schools in Samokov were filled to capacity and were working toward government recognition with a better program besides the religious training they offered.

The pastors in the churches were better trained, and the churches were working toward self support. Bible women were active, holding meetings with the women and helping with child training.

During the Balkan Wars much relief work was taken

797 carried on among the refugees. The feeling of suspicion that had often been apparent was fast disappearing. Queen Eleonora, second wife of King Ferdinand, was a close friend of the Samokov missionaries and, with their help, persuaded the American Red Cross to send two trained women to conduct a school for nurses. This school was interrupted by the coming of the Germans to Sofia during World War I, but after the war the two American nurses opened their school in Sofia at the Red Cross Hospital, and thus began a splendid work which has given Bulgaria some excellent nurses. These young women are now working all over the country, doing fine welfare work among the villages, and carrying on public health work in the cities. The Protestants can well claim credit for this achievement, for at the time the work was started the nursing profession was looked down upon by the Bulgarians. It was only through the persistence of the director of the Girls' School in Samokov that she persuaded some of her graduates to enroll in the nursing school. It was a time of hard decision for these girls who had no encouragement from their families and friends and plenty of discouragement. They became a nucleus of a worthy work which has helped the people of Bulgaria boundlessly.

Perhaps the most important contribution to Bulgarian life and culture has come from the schools.

In 1874 the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist-Episcopal Church sent out some women workers. They began their work among the women and taught the little children in the

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homes. Work was slow again because of the Russo-Turkish War.

In 1880 the missionaries felt a need for a school for girls, and a small one was started. In 1882 the Mission Board--Methodist--built a small building. There was very much persecution but the missionaries persisted and new American workers were sent out. Several primary schools were opened in Sistoff, Rustchuk, and Ochanie, with the Bible women teaching. The people grew more friendly and the Christians - Prostestants - were no longer stoned in the streets.

Sonn funds for two new buildings were granted by the Board in America and the school was recognized by the Bulgarian Government on June 3, 1927.

By this time the school was giving the regular gymnasium course and in addition had added a domestic science department.

A feature started by the missionaries at Lovetch was the Daily Vacation Bible School. In 1926 they had 575 pupils in attendance.

The Lovetch school has been a vital factor in preparing many of the Christian women in Bulgaria.

One should mention also that there were throughout Northern Bulgarian and in Sofia well-established Methodist Churches. Their pastors have been trained abroad in many instances. Although the membership in the churches is not large, there are good attendances at the meetings, and the reputation of the "Protestants" or "Evangelisti" is of the highest

797 for integrity and high standards of conduct.

At different times the Methodists have had publications in Bulgarian also. In recent years the trend has been to unite the work in north and south Bulgaria. So that both sections meet together in annual conferences. both are responsible for the publications, that is, they were until the present Communist Government stopped all such work, The school at Lovetch is also closed, and the last principal, the late Miss Mellony Turner, was expelled by the communists in 1948.

A direct outgrowth of the Protestant work in Bulgaria was the American Grade School in Sofia. It began in 1923 to fill a need for the children finishing the kindergarten organized by Miss Clarke some years before. She had hoped to have a full course of American schools for children in Bulgaria. Mrs. Woodruff began the grade school which did excellent work and continued with overflowing attendance until it was closed by the Nazis in 1942. The school has not been able as yet to reopen.

Another contribution of the Protestants was the village and folk school for girls and boys in Pordim in 1929. This school was founded by Dr. and Mrs. Edward Haskell with the purpose to train the village youth for practical living. The girls especially were trained for better housekeeping, child care, etc. This school is now under government control.

The best known Protestant school in Bulgaria is what is now called the "American College", near Sofia. It is the

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the outgrowth of the little school that went to Samokov soon after mission work began in Bulgaria.

Eventually both the boys' and thr girls' schools in the compound at Samokov outgrew their plant. The boys had some practical work along with the regular gymnasium course which had been recognized by the government in 1922. There was a printing plant and a carpenter shop in connection with the boys' school.

After World War I when the work took on new vigor, the missionaries began to feel the need for enlarging the scope .. their work and of providing wider opportunities for their students. The funds of the Mission Board were not suffiecient for such work, so when the invitation came for the schools to join the Near East Colleges Foundation, it was decided to take part in that. It meant putting the schools under a swparate Board with the other colleges of the Near East. It also meant moving the schools to Sofia, which was now a big city and the capital. A fine new plant was built outside Sofia on a fine plot of land. The school began moving over to Sofia in 1927 and continued to work there until it also was closed by the Nazis in 1942. It has not been reopened by the Americans, and the Communists are at present using the buildings for a Police School.

In mentioning the contribution of the Protestants, we should not forget the temperance work which was started by the Clarkes. There were Temperance Leagues in all the church

797 communities, and they worked only for the good of the communities.

797 575 The organizations of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. were started independently of the Protestant or mission people. But those starting both organizations were people who had been closely connected the the Protestant work in Bulgaria. The purpose of organizing these was to make them serve all Bulgarians, especially the Orthodox Christians as well. The Y.M.C.A. was started by the husband of a graduate of the Lovetch School, who was not a Protestant himself, and a friend of his, a banker who was a Methodist. They were able to have an American secretary sent out, and the Y.M.C.A. did an excellent work for the Bulgarian youths. It held evening classes and had fine summer camps in the mountains and on the Black Sea.

The Y.W.C.A. was started by a graduate who was the daughter of a graduate from the Women's College at Constantinople, a Bulgarian. She was ably assisted by several young women who were graduates also of the Constantinople School. The Y.W.C.A. was a vigorous and successful undertaking, reaching many young women and girls in Bulgaria. It conducted many classes and had a summer camp for industrial girls at Zemen all through the summer. It also carried on a good work for the factory girls around Sofia.

Both the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. have been closed since the arrival of the Nazis in 1942. The Communists also do not allow them to continue their work.

B15

The Protestants had started an orphanage or two and these were being carried on in a Christian manner. It is not known whether or not they are still in operation. 797

It is appropriate in these notes to mention the recent trials of early 1949 when 15 Protestant pastors were brought before the courts in Sofia and condemned by the Communists for treason. Much attention was given to these trials by the outside world. The trials were a part of the general persecution of religion and religious workers by the present Communists. 798

These Bulgarian pastors were on the whole humble people, representing small religious groups. They were trying in every way to conform to the new regulations of the Communists, so they were not dangerous to the regime. All they wanted was to be able to work quietly among their people. Several of them even went so far as to serve the Communists and try to show that the Communist regime was really a democratic one. Strange to say, these men suffered most in the trials and the sentences.

Aside from being representatives of religious groups, these men were also attached to American groups of the same name in America, so that fact worked against them too. The Communists want to convince their countries that religion and America are enemies of Communism.

At present in Bulgaria anyone who has at any time been connected with America, American schools, or organizations starting from America, is under surveillance and does not consider himself outside danger.

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795 The principal sects of Protestants now working in Bulgaria are the Congregationalists, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Pentecostalists.

These are all native Bulgarian, as their foreign representatives have been sent out.

In numbers, the membership in the churches is small. However, there is much interest at present in the "hotter" denominations, no doubt as a direct result of the present war tension in the country. The work of the churches is limited to meetings in their church buildings. These meetings are "supervised" always by someone from the Communist Party, but attendance is especially large. The pastors officiating are chosen carefully with the idea of conforming with the government, yet they are allowed to preach sermons.

None of the schools started by the Protestant work are functioning at present in Bulgaria, except that at Pordim which is run by the government.

There is evidence that, in spite of the terror exercised by the Communists in Bulgaria, the Protestants will continue to have their churches. Many Protestants will remain loyal to their beliefs and will suffer quietly, as all good Bulgarians are now doing, hoping for the day of a real liberation that will bring freedom to the conscience again.

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